Course: HCE 650/750: Beginning of Life Ethics, 3 Credits
Term: Spring 2020  Jan 13 – May 10, 2020
Instructor: Peter I. Osuji, C.S.Sp., Ph.D.
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Day, Time & Location: Tuesday, 3:05-5:45 pm. Fisher Hall 600.
Office Hours: By Appointment or walk-in.

Course Description
This course will familiarize students to the ethics of reproductive medicine and beginning-of-life issues such as contraception, male womb, surrogacy/outourcing parenting, artificial reproductive technologies, human cloning, animal-human hybrids, morality of abortion, the moral status of the human embryo, and fetal tissue transplants. The course will look at the various ethical controversies surrounding the definitions of life and of humanity, procreative rights,

Course Objectives
Competences

Upon the completion of the course students will master the following competences which should be demonstrated both in specific research projects and in the course essay:

a) Historical analysis
   A capacity to present the historical analysis of present day debate on beginning-of-life issues. Students should be able to explain the moral traditions involved in the debates.

b) Comparative analysis
   A capacity to critically analyze the differences or complementarity between the common morality/Dominant Moral theories (DMT) perspectives and some religious or cultural ethical perspectives on Beginning-of-life issues.

c) Theoretical analysis of Beginning-of-life issues.
   A capacity for argument formation, literature integration, and critical analysis when writing a research essay on Beginning-of-life issues.

Learning Outcomes

1This syllabus is provisional and subject to revision.
This course will contribute to the fulfillment of the general HCE Program Learning Outcomes. The following Learning Outcomes pertain to HCE 650/750.

a) **Fundamental Knowledge.**

   Students can understand as well as analyze HCE theory and methods, major applied topics in beginning-of-life ethics.

b) **Multi-disciplinary Study.**

   Students can critically relate HCE with multi-disciplinary fields in health care, specifically in connection to the historical background and the philosophical interpretation of fundamental notions and evolving social and cultural attitudes.

c) **Scholarship.**

   Students can research and write scholarly essays, teach and communicate effectively as well as present academic papers. In doing this, they present cogent arguments, engage scholarly literature, and demonstrate critical thinking and analysis.

d) **Ethical Leadership.**

   Students can provide ethical leadership in the area of the Beginning-of-life ethics.

**Course Methodology**

There will be weekly classes per the Duquesne requirement. The general aim of the course, as one of the courses in the HCE graduate program, is to prepare students for the writing of the Dissertation Proposal. In particular, it will focus on the development of research competencies in connection to the area of Beginning-of-life ethics. The implication of this aim is that the emphasis in the course will be on student learning rather than instructor teaching. Students will especially be trained in doing research, critically analyzing scholarly literature, presenting research results and discussing them in a peer setting, and writing critical, and analytical papers on relevant topics.

Students will focus on three Research Projects:

**Course Procedures**

a) **Research Projects and Required Readings**

1) **General Procedure**

   For this course, the students need to complete three written assignments: two research projects (7 pages excluding end notes and bibliography), and one research essay (25 pages excluding end notes and bibliography). Students will prepare and submit these assignments following this schedule.

   i. Research Project #1, due Friday, February 7
   ii. Research Project #2, due Friday, March 27
   iii. Research Essay, due Sunday, May 2

Option to submit mid-term essay. For students who want to be assisted in their progress, a draft of the essay can be submitted for feedback by Monday, April 6.

Final version is due Sunday, May 2.

At the completion of each research project, students will make a 10-minutes class presentation on their paper. Also, at the end of the course, students will be required to make a 15-minute interactive class presentation based on their research essay. The presentations based on Research Essay will take place during the last two weeks of the course.

Reading Requirements.
Each Research Project will require students to critically engage the equivalent of two or three books to (a) master the relevant knowledge and (b) engage in critical reading and writing.

Literature integration.
For each of the Research Projects (i.e. RP1 & RP2), students should include approximately 25 notes referring to the texts assigned for the project. Recall that the title page, table of content, endnotes, and bibliography do not count toward the 7 pages.

Research competencies.
The research competencies in the course are identified by the Research Projects and Essay: (a) historical analysis of debate on beginning-of-life issues, (b) comparative analysis, and (c) historical analysis of present day debate on beginning-of-life issues. The Research Projects and Essay will demonstrate that the student has mastered the research competencies.

Relation of Projects with Essay.
The Research Projects may be integrated into the Research Essay but not in a manner of cut-and-paste from one to the other. While the research papers are focused on one specific competency, the course essay must demonstrate the three competencies. The research essay is based on a self-selected topic different for each student.

2) Research Project #1: Historical analysis
   Presents the historical analysis of the present-day debate on a Beginning-of-life issue, exploring the moral traditions involved in the debates.

3) Research Project #2: Comparative analysis
   A comparative analysis of the differences and/or complementarity between the common morality/Dominant Moral Theories perspectives and some religious or cultural ethical perspectives on a Beginning-of-life issue.

b) Research Essay
The research essay will require students to substantively apply the Research Competencies of this course to a Beginning-of-life issue. For the essay, each student will choose an issue or topic in Beginning-of-life ethics and develop a creative, critical ethical argument with literature integration regarding that issue or topic.

Requirements:

1. Submit a Thesis, 500 words abstract, outline, and basic bibliography to be submitted by Wednesday, March 11.
2. Students will receive general feedback in class and individual feedback through Blackboard.
3. Submit a copy of the essay by date assigned.
4. The length of the research essay should be, at least, 25 pages, double-spacing. The title page, table of content, endnotes and bibliography do not count towards the 25 pages.
5. Students must adopt the format of the Chicago Manual of Style, as required by the College for dissertation submissions.
6. Students can quote from publications in any language but need to provide an English translation also.
7. Make a Title page and a separate Table of Content.
8. Present a brief Introduction and Conclusion.
9. Notes to the references made in the essay.
   a. Use end notes (as opposed to foot notes at the bottom of the page).
   b. Do not use notes for narrative explanations – they belong in the main text.
   c. There should be approximately 100 end notes in the essay.
10. Bibliography. List all the references in alphabetical order. Only list items actually referred to in the essay.
11. Use of online references. Online references must be accurately identified with complete web address etc., including the date of access. Students are requested to critically deal with content from the internet.
12. Divisions and subdivisions. Use major divisions (headings) and subdivisions (subheadings), evenly distributed throughout the essay, to lay out the sequence of concepts and arguments.

**HCE Handbook.** The Center for Healthcare ethics has developed a *Handbook* of Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines to guide students in all curriculum related matters.

**Course Grade.** There will be no examinations. The course grade will be assigned based on the quality of the course research essay and the three research projects. The grade will be a combination of 15% for each of the two research projects and 70% for the final essay.

No midterm grades will be assigned. End of term grades will be assigned adopting grading policy in the McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts, as follows:

- A 4.0 distinguished scholarly work
- A- 3.7
B+  3.3
B  3.0   normal progress towards degree
B-  2.7
C+  2.3
C  2.0   warning; student subject to departmental action
F  0.0

**Academic Integrity.** This syllabus incorporates the “Expectations of Academic Integrity.” Cheating and plagiarism cannot be tolerated. All relevant policies of the McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts apply.

**Reasonable Accommodations.**

Students with documented disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations if needed. If you need accommodations, please contact the Office of Freshman Development and Special Student Services in 309 Duquesne Union (412-396-6657) as soon as possible. Accommodations cannot always be granted retrospectively.

**COURSE READINGS & SCHEDULE.**

**Week 1: Tue. Jan 14.** Introduction to the course requirements, procedures and theme.

(Mon. Jan 20 Martin Luther King Day, no class.)

**Principles & Rights.**

**Week 2: Tue. Jan 21.** Sanctity of Life & Dignity of Human Being.


**Recommended reading**


**Week 3: Tue. Jan 28.** Reproductive Rights

**Contraception & Abortion.**

**Week 4: Tue. Feb 4. - Abortion, embryo status.**

  **Recommended.**

**Week 5: Tue. Feb 11. - Contraception.**

**Recommended Reading**
- Legal cases. Griswold V. Connecticut 381 U.S. 479.

**Reproductive Technology.**
Week 6: Tue. Feb 18. - Artificial reproductive technologies.


Recommended

Week 7: Tue. Feb 25. - Artificial intelligence in reproduction.


Infertility & Embryo Adoption

Tue. Mar 3. Spring Break No Class

Week 8: Tue. Mar. 10. - Infertility.


**Recommended**

**Week 9: Tue. Mar. 17** - Embryo adoption, cryopreservation …
- Peter A. Clark. "Ethical Implications of Embryo Adoption." Chp10, pp 213-229. in *Pluripotent Stem Cell Biology - Advances in Mechanisms, Methods and Mode.* IntechOpen Access Publishers. 2014 [https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/6e61/bacfb14ce02b8c19c1b49d957dce51cc58bc.pdf?_ga=2.178234021.1262998072.1573691516-442266895.1573691516](https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/6e61/bacfb14ce02b8c19c1b49d957dce51cc58bc.pdf?_ga=2.178234021.1262998072.1573691516-442266895.1573691516)

**Emerging Technology.**

**Week 10: Tue. Mar 24** - Male womb.

Recommended

Week 12: Tue. April 7. – Presentations of course essays.

(April 9-13 EASTER BREAK)

Week 13: Tue. April 14. – (Class meet as Monday Class) No class

Week 14: Tue. April 21.- Presentations of course essays.

Week 15: Tue. April 28. Presentations of course essays.

Wed. April 29 Reading day

Part 2. Research Essay. Due May 2